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Tracks of the past

Gibbs, Ewan; Henderson, Susan; Bianchi, Victoria

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Tracks of The Past Findings Leaflet

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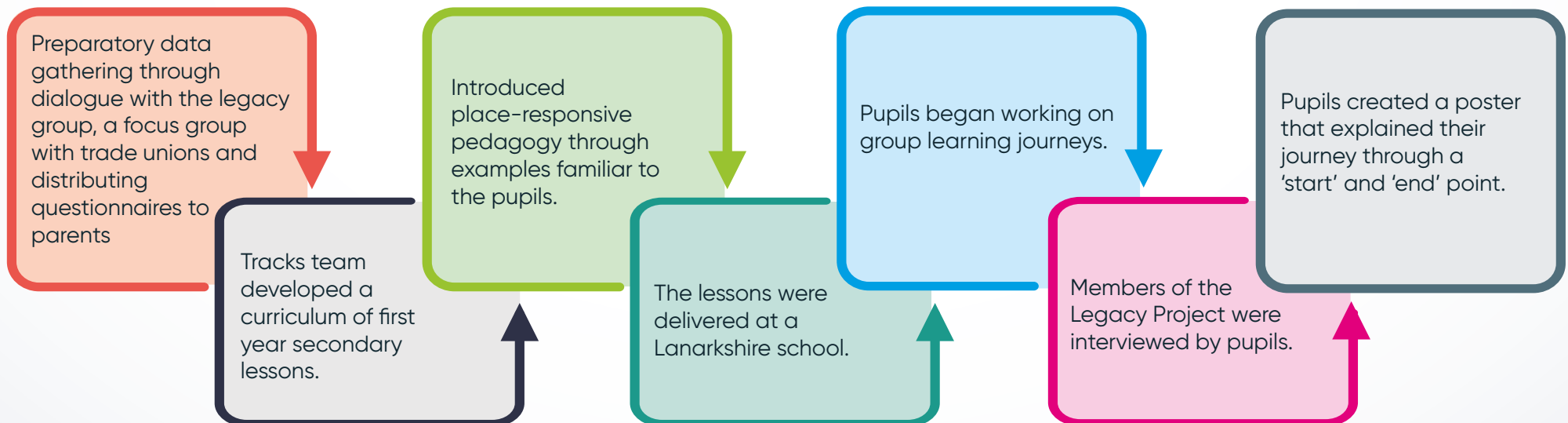
Tracks of the Past:

A Place-Responsive Education Industrial Heritage Project

What is place-responsive education? Place-responsive (or place-based) education is a pedagogical approach that traces the relationships between people, things, and landscapes. It encourages young people to situate themselves in relation to the past. This approach allows pupils and teachers to use interdisciplinary learning, which is a key philosophy of Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence. Yet there have been few research studies that have piloted place-responsive methods in Scotland. In our project, we wanted to see if place-responsive education could support learning about a particularly difficult topic of the past – industrial heritage – to help them understand contemporary events, such as trade union activism.

Why Uddingston? A workers' occupation of the Caterpillar tractor factory, lasting 103 days, took place in Tannochside, Uddingston during 1987. The occupiers tried to save 1200 jobs by preventing the plant's closure, which eventually followed (Gibbs and Phillips, 2018).

What is a place-responsive learning journey? To learn about their local industrial heritage, pupils researched together and created a 'learning journey'. They used archival sources, physical objects, interviews with former occupiers and self-directed online research. A place-responsive creative output (shown) was imagined by pupils, highlighting what and how they had learned: the only requirement was that the output had a 'beginning' and 'end' point. CfE Experiences and Outcomes were used by the researchers/teachers as points of reference.



'I liked the bit where you got to, like, meet people because, like, they were there and it's kind of like a primary source and it was quite cool to see what their experiences were' (S1 Pupil).

'We think this is a good interdisciplinary possibility, because it incorporates everything and it incorporates the local area which we really liked' (Participating Teacher).

Are place-responsive pedagogies effective?

Our initial findings have shown value in place-responsive pedagogy as a means to support pupil learning about industrial heritage. It has created:

- Democratic spaces of/within the classroom: A space of educational disruption was created in our lessons which impacted on what and how pupils learned (Henderson and Dombrowski, 2017). The artefacts introduced to the learning space (archival sources, iPads, name badges, arts materials as well researchers and workers from the Occupation) valued a collaborative form of learning: new learning was successful where pupils could 'inhabit' the space. Chairs/tables were rearranged from 'rows' to form groups, with an island of resources (a person; documents; artefacts). Over time, learners gained a stronger sense of autonomy in creating their learning journey: this included 'leaving desks' to consult and share with other learners, and approaching Legacy workers independently. At the end of the project, pupils interviewed reported on their learning about how the Occupation had affected the lives of local people, including women.
- Spaces of intergenerational learning: Discussions with former Caterpillar occupiers encouraged pupils to understand history as a dispersed form of knowledge. These dialogic encounters between pupils and place-makers in their own community stimulated interactions centred on individual and collective memories.

Our next steps with our stakeholders:

- Working with local and global communities to curate (new) artefacts for industrial heritage education:
- To plan for learner-centred collaborative projects and ensure appropriate assessment that is aligned with the dialogic approach to place-responsive education (which does not devalue projects without 'end products').
- To investigate with other educators to further heritage contexts for a place-responsive approach, including more local site-based visits.



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